789 /103/ Happily, it is possible to avoid lightning. To achieve this,
821 it is necessary to find in the bush a white substance rather similar to hyena droppings which the natives call "rain dung," as well as certain tree roots. Part of these roots is left to soak in water for three days, and the rest is burned to ashes. A chicken is sacrificed to the tim. Then the water in which the roots have steeped is used to cook the millet mush, and the sauce is made with baobab leaves. All the soukala dwellers must eat this millet mush, and every one of them is marked on the back and chest with a cross of ashes mixed with karite butter. The horse and donkey, alone among the animals, are similarly marked on the back, chest, and inside the mouth. The huts are marked on the east side, the direction from which the rain comes, and above the entrance. Now there is nothing to be feared. We do feel, however, that lightning-rods are more effective.

759 All these tim, medicinal remedies, amulets, talismans, and
756 superstitious recipes, are prescribed either by true doctors who actually know the properties of herbs and effect real cures or by sorcerers. The doctors are often consulted. Since they specialize in certain diseases, they are consulted for those diseases alone. Those who have been cured by a medicine willingly make it known to friends who are afflicted with the same illness. The doctors are as numerous as the diseases which afflict mankind.

278 Some doctors are not merely healers but also poisoners, and they
674 are greatly feared. The surest way to get rid of an enemy is to consult them, but their fees are high. They have slow poisons which consume the victim gradually and the overwhelming ones which kill in a few hours. They put them in drinks, in millet mush, or more
754 often in kola nuts. There are also people, sorcerers rather than doctors, who claim the power to kill at a distance and who know how to practice sympathetic magic. Their prestige has waned since the French occupation because they have not managed to kill the Whites who settled in the country; but they say that our tim are more powerful than theirs.

754 The sorcerers are also numerous. There are those who take up the
756 call of their own accord and those who are born sorcerers. The former
791 are the bagré and seuya; the latter the tibo, bartibo, waongo, and nyonnyonsé. Pardon us these barbaric words, but they are impossible to translate.

791 The bagre is the nice, innocuous kind of sorcerer, who helps the
756 poor for a penny or two. He is consulted about everything. For example, what does the future hold? Will fire destroy my huts or won't

791 it? Will my journey be successful? And so forth. If the answer is un-
756 favorable, what must I do to avert misfortune? The bagré are resorted to especially in case of illness, to find out which spirit caused the disease and what the spirit wants. The role of the sorcerers is thus /104/ chiefly to prescribe the sacrifice and to indicate to whom it must be directed. More rarely they prescribe a medicine, but no one puts much faith in such remedies; in most instances, they indicate a negative treatment by stating what is forbidden to the patient.

756 They use the process of elimination to spot the disease. "He has a headache," says the sorcerer. If the reply is negative, he mentions another part of the body. "A stomach-ache ... No. A pain in the arm ... No." He must eventually hit on the right statement. If the sick person is cured following the prescribed sacrifice, the sorcerer is said to be skillful and to be truly in touch with the spirits, and his practice and income grow accordingly. If the patient is not cured or dies, it is either because the sorcerer has cheated or because he does not "see." Another sorcerer is sought out, in the hope of finding a true seer.

Sorcerers are carefully listened to, and everything they prescribe is faithfully carried out. Since they sometimes guess right, since even more often the patient is cured through auto-suggestion because the sorcerer said that he would be cured, since among people who fall ill those who get well are fortunately more numerous than those who die, for all these reasons the prestige of the sorcerers is high and their practice numerous, for it includes all the Mossi. The bara (plural of bagré) are not feared. They are abused when their prescriptions fail, and they are never consulted in the course of trials to find out the name of a culprit.

791 On the other hand, people often ask them who has killed their
695 child, their wife, their livestock, and the bagré sometimes indicates the culprit, with resulting enmity between the wronged party and the individual pointed out as guilty. The latter often resorts to trial by ordeal in self-defense. He himself suggests that he should drink poison, or that he should be burned with a red-hot iron or strangled with braided shreds of straw. If he is innocent, the poison will not harm him, the fire will not burn him, the straws will come apart. Only those who wished to do so resorted to such ordeals, and the judges never made use of this procedure. In trials actual proof had to be submitted.

791 Anyone may become a sorcerer, and those who take up the call
756 are usually poor chaps who have nothing to live on, who do not have the strength to till the soil, or who simply want to live without working. When someone enters the brotherhood of bara, people say that he wants to learn how to be idle, and they laugh about it.

791 During the dry season the country is overrun with hordes of Gourounsi and Nankana, filthy and ragged, who claim to know everything and to possess a charm for every purpose, even to make peanuts grow. Led by a chief who speaks a few words of Mossi, they wander from one village to another, dancing and singing for the nabas like the mountebanks who perform at the wagon door of fortune tellers to attract the public... They are consulted, and they return home well rigged out thanks to the cowries they have gathered in Mossi country.

754 /105/ The seuya or soul-eaters are greatly feared. The death of
774 a native, especially that of a child, is often ascribed to them. They have the power of leaving the human body they inhabit and wandering about everywhere in search of a soul to eat. Fire is their vehicle, and they travel about at night on the will-o'-the-wisps that wander in the fields around the huts. They may be stopped by the trees and thrown to the ground, and those who possess an amulet more powerful than their can drive them away.

The seuya are extremely dangerous, for complete protection against them is impossible. They work by night. Every mortal soul leaves the body often during the night and goes wandering about. Woe to it if it should come upon a seuya. He will pounce upon the soul or put it under a big stone, and the unfortunate body that owns it will fall ill and eventually die. The only remedy is to offer a sacrifice to the tangandé, and the guardian animal of the village will go on a search until it locates and releases the unhappy soul; the tangandé causes it to re-enter the body, and the sick person gets well. If, however, the seuya ate the soul, or if he is in connivance with the tangandé, nothing can be done, and death swiftly ensues.

791 The bagré sorcerers can tell who is a seuya and who is not. Some
754 of them have a tim which permits them to distinguish the seuya in a crowd of people. They need only smoke a pipe, and the eyes of the soul-eating man will redden and fill with tears. Those accused of
754 being seuya usually deny the charge, and to call someone a seuya is
[578] one of the worst insults. We have already described the heinous death inflicted on these unfortunate people. Old women especially are